

SUMMARY TABLE – STANDING ORDER AMENDMENTS

Current Standing Order Reference	Type of amendment	Summary of proposed amendment
Part 1 - Introduction		
Application and Interpretation		
1(1)(a-b)	Clarification of existing practice	Clarifies these Standing Orders apply to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Court of Common Council (rather than the Court of Aldermen, which have their own Standing Orders when acting exclusively in that capacity)
1(3)(b) and (4)	Clarification of existing practice	By definition, working parties are informal and are therefore not subject to some of the formal procedures set out. Direct reference has, therefore, been removed in SO 1(3)(b) However, at the November 2024 informal meeting of the Court, the point was made that the Standing Orders set out best practice in meeting management and, as such, should be used (where relevant) in the management of working parties. SO 1(4) has therefore been introduced as a 'catch-all' on the application of the Standing Orders for the conduct of business of working parties.
1(3)(d)	Clarification of existing practice	This SO has been deleted as, due to diverging application between subsequent Standing Orders and sub-committees, it was felt it would be simpler to be explicit in each instance. Therefore, where Standing Orders apply to Sub-Committees, this has now been expressly stated throughout the document. It is not the case that the Standing Orders simply do not apply to Sub-Committees.
Suspension		
2(2)	Clarification of existing practice	See 1(3)(d)

Amendment		
3(1)	Clarification of existing practice	<p>During consultation, there seemed to be confusion as to why Policy and Resources Committee was responsible for reviewing Standing Orders before submission to Court. This minor amendment seeks to address the fact that the Committee has the responsibility by virtue of its oversight of governance arrangements (as captured in its Court Order.)</p> <p>There was also a further misunderstanding regarding Members’ ability to amend Standing Orders if eventual proposals to the Court were <i>not</i> supported by Policy & Resources Committee. The introduction of “first” attempts to signify that proposals will come through a committee <i>first</i>, but that ultimately Court will have the ability to amend in the usual manner, and will be able to amend proposals providing they are legally sound.</p> <p>For example: In response to this report, it may not be considered in order at the consequent Court of Common Council meeting, to move and amendment to the Standing Orders relating to SOs 53-60, on the basis that they relate to property transactions and no options in relation to these have been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee this day. It would, however, be reasonable to assume that an amendment could be made at Court, in respect of matters such as the timings for speakers in debate, as options have been set out and “first considered” by Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p>This Standing Order relates to the process permanent revision of Standing Orders. When permanent revisions are presented to the Court, they can be approved by a simple majority. Suspension of Standing Orders (as set out in SO 2) is a temporary suspension, and in those instances a 2/3 majority is required. No change is proposed in respect of SO 2.</p>

Part 2 – Court of Common Council Meetings		
Quorum		
7(2)	Change Clarification of existing practice	Increases the time allotted to establish a quorum from five minutes, to ten minutes, in line with the corresponding proposals in relation to Committee meetings. Further This addition makes clear that if a quorum is not established within 5 minutes of the published start time, the meeting will be dissolved and all business will be adjourned to the next meeting.
Attendance		
8(2)	Clarification of existing practice	Clarification on the current procedure for the introduction of Common Councillors at the Court of Common Council, noting that new Aldermen are formally introduced at their first meeting of the Court of Aldermen.
Reports		
9(2)	Clarification of existing practice	It is not possible for Working Parties to report directly to the Court as they are (by definition) non-decision making. Explicit reference is, therefore, unnecessary. This Standing Order was necessary historically, owing to the Hospitality Working Party which regularly reported directly to the Court. This Working Party no longer exists, and responsibilities now rest with the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee.
Ballots		
10(1)(b)	Clarification of existing practice	Reference to the Officers whose appointments are within the gift of the Court, are set out in SO63(1)
10(1)(c)	Clarification of existing practice	For completeness, it was felt that explicit reference to the ballot required for the role of Chief Commoner, be referenced here.
10(4)	No Change	No change proposed although some Members did query why there was a mixed approach to voting (simple majority vs preferential). Preferential is currently only used when there are more than two candidates standing for one vacancy. Members initial appetite for change was sought at Informal Court, with no considerable concerns/alternatives expressed or immediate appetite to change.

<p>10(5)</p>	<p>Clarification of existing practice</p> <p>Introducing process</p>	<p>Clarification on the methodology of the allocation of varying term lengths when appointing to Committee vacancies, in the event of no contest. This includes a definition of how “seniority” is determined.</p> <p>Divergence from the above practice, to be agreed by all parties concerned, will be overseen by the Town Clerk (to ensure there is sufficient record of the agreement).</p>
<p>Conduct of Debate</p>		
<p>11(1)</p>	<p>Clarification of existing practice</p>	<p>Confirmation about the application of this SO and that the use of the term “Motion” includes those of Members’ and those brought forward by Committee. This Standing Order applies to the conduct of debate on Motions brought forward to Court by Committee (via a Report pursuant to SO9) and by Members (pursuant to SO12), as well as Amendments to both forms of Motions.</p>
<p>11(2)</p>	<p>Clarification of existing practice</p>	<p>Making explicit the current practice adopted for unable to stand to indicate their desire to speak at Court.</p>
<p>11(4)</p>	<p>Clarification of existing practice</p> <p>Change</p>	<p>Clarification over the Standing Order applies when introducing and debating a Motion, Amendment or Report. Further clarification that a Sub-Committee Chair may introduce a report where a Sub-Committee is expressly authorised to report directly to the Court (e.g. Civic Affairs Sub-Committee).</p> <p>In response to general comments on the efficiency of Court business, changes include that the Mover of the Motion (or Chairman introducing a report) has the time allotted for introduction reduced from seven minutes to five minutes. Their concluding remarks are also reduced from seven minutes to five minutes. Similarly, those speaking in debate have had their first contribution revised down from five to three minutes. At informal Court it there seemed little appetite to increase the length of time someone can speak for a second time in debate, so this is now unchanged (two minutes). Ultimately, this is a matter for Members in how best to balance efficiency and sufficient opportunity for representation.</p>

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11(6)	Change	<p>The addition of this Standing Order encourages Members to submit advanced notice for amendments to Court Motions/Reports. This is to help expedite Court procedures and provide better assurance to Members, as (if adhered to) it allows officers to consider and advise Movers/Chairs of the implications of said amendment (be they legal, financial, equalities, risk or otherwise). As officers are unable to contribute to debate at Court, this is particularly valuable.</p> <p>This will not be a requirement, as it is recognised from consultation that some Members felt it desirable to be able to move an amendment without notice.</p>
11(7)	Clarification of existing practice	To be revised subject to the adoption of Standing Order 11(6).
11(8)	Change	<p>In response to general comments on the efficiency of Court business, it is proposed that (in the event of a debate on the Amendment of a Motion) the Mover of the original Motion will have no more than five minutes to respond to debate on the Amendment. This is a reduction of five minutes, from the current practice of 10 minutes.</p>
Members' Motions		
12	Clarification of existing practice	Change of title for this Standing Order to make explicit that it relates to the submission of Motions brought forward by individual Members.
12(6)	Clarification of existing practice	Confirmation that there is 60 minutes total, will be allowed for the discussion of all Members' Motions (as opposed to 60 minutes <i>per</i> Motion).

Questions		
13(1)(c-d)	Change	<p>Initially, at Informal Court, there was a proposal that Members give nine days notice for Court questions, rather than two. This would have allowed for a copy of the Question(s) to appear in the Summons. This was, however, not supported by Members, who felt that nine days did not allow the Court to be very agile or relevant.</p> <p>As such, the recommendation has been brought back to Members with a request to amend to three days. This will improve the ability of officers to circulate questions to Members 48hrs before the meeting, increase the time Members have to form supplementary questions. Having also sought feedback from officers as part of this consultation, it will increase the time they have to support Chairs with crafting the answer response. The adoption of this amendment would better enable officers across the organisation to manage workload pressures. The facility for urgent questions remains unchanged (see SO 13(3)).</p>
13(1)NB	Change	Proposal restricting Members to one formal Court question per meeting (not including supplementaries.) This restriction would be waived in the event a question is carried over from the previous meeting. This is proposed in response to facilitate a greater spread of Questioners in any given Court meeting.
13(2)	Change	A large number Members felt a considerable number of questions have been directed solely at the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee that may have otherwise been answered by a more appropriate chair. This amendment removes the ability for a questioner to 'veto' the re-direction of a question when, in the opinion of the Town Clerk, it has been addressed to the chair of an inappropriate Committee. In cases of dispute, the Lord Mayor's ruling will be final.
13(3)	Change	Has been amended in accordance with proposals set out in 13.1.c.

13(4)	Change	<p>In response to concerns over the length of time taken by chairs to respond to questions, and in an attempt to maximise the opportunity for more Questions, without increasing the maximum length of the overall item, it is proposed that Chairs have three minutes to respond to any given question or supplementary question, revised down from five minutes.</p> <p>On balance, it was not considered by Members to be desirable to extend the time allotted for questions, on the basis that it delayed Members from getting to key decision items in non-public session. Similarly, there was little appetite to reduce the overall envelope for Questions, on the basis that 30minutes is the accepted minimum for Local Authorities (as per <i>Knowles on Local Authority Meetings</i>), noting that the City Corporation has a remit much wider than this.</p>
13(5)	Change	<p>Increases the number of Members who can ask a supplementary question (therefore increasing possible representation across the Court) but removes the ability to ask a second supplementary question. This provides more Members with the opportunity to raise a supplementary, but allows for a net reduction of the maximum number of supplementary questions from nine, to seven (per 'original' question).</p> <p>Much like the change proposed to SO13(4), this has been suggested in an attempt to maximise the number of questions that can be dispensed with, encouraging greater involvement from a wider group of Members, whilst not needing to extend the time of the overall Questions item.</p>
13(7)	Clarification of existing practice	Sets out that, like original questions as set out in SO13(1)(a), supplementary questions must also relate to matters in which the Court has powers or duties.
13(8)	Change	<p>Is a completely new Standing Order, which proposes a time limit of 2 minutes for each supplementary question. There is currently no time limit.</p> <p>If the Chair is to have no more than 3 minutes to respond (as per revised SO 13(4)), it suggested that supplementary question did not exceed this length.</p>

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13(9)	No Change	<p>No change proposed to the overall envelope of time allotted for Court Questions. A minimum of 30 minutes is the accepted minimum for local authorities. Other changes will, if agreed, ensure that the Court does not reach that time limit as regularly (e.g. by reducing the length of time for Chairs to deliver answers).</p> <p>Proposals will also hopefully address the general concern of some Members, that continued, prolonged, Questions sessions prevent attendance later on in the agenda, for non-public decision items.</p>
13(10)	<p>Clarification of existing practice</p> <p>Introducing process</p>	<p>Confirms current practice with respect of Questions not dealt with, owing to the expiration of the 40 minute time limit. Whereby, answers to questions issued by email to the full Court.</p> <p>A new proposal, allows for these written answers to be latterly published on the COLC committee website, available to the public, which will hopefully make the option more attractive/transparent to Members (rather than holding over until the next Court.)</p>
Divisions		
14(1)	Clarification of existing practice	Making explicit the current practice adopted for those unable to stand to indicate their desire to speak at Court.
Disorder		
15(1)	Clarification of existing practice	For the purposes of this Standing Order, the Lord Mayor is the Chair of the Court of Common Council meetings.
Decisions between Meetings		
19(3)	Introducing transparent process	Sets out the current position that, in the case of a conflict, the Town Clerk may determine the an alternate senior committee chair to consult for the purposes of a decision to be taken under the Court's urgency procedure.
Part 3 – Committees and Sub committees		
Appointment		
21	Clarification of existing practice	Reflects the move to using “civic” more consistently, rather than “municipal”.

Committee Limit		
22(1)	No Change	<p>Members felt that the six committee limit was fair and did not require revision.</p> <p>However, Members did use this Standing Order to express an interest on whether consistent non-attendance should disqualify a Member from a Committee or Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Recently, attendance records for meetings were made more readily available and so, in principle, Members may choose to take these records into account when appointing to committee vacancies in future. With that in mind, no change is currently proposed. However, if Members are supportive of introducing such a measure, officers will explore the most appropriate mechanism and seek approval from this Committee, either under delegated authority or at your February meeting, ahead of March Court. There will be resource implications to policing and administering a more rigorous regime.</p>
22(3)	Clarification of existing practice	Move to using “civic” more consistently, rather than “municipal”.
Ward Committees		
23(3)(d)	Clarification of existing practice	Confirmation that the number of residents per Ward is determined by the Ward Lists provided by Electoral Services.
23(6)(c)	Introducing transparent process	Sets out a new, clear, mechanism for Members who are not satisfied that the proper consultation and Ward Committee appointment process has been adhered to in line with Standing Orders 23(6)(a-b). In practice, this is what happens already but provides a formal ‘signposting’ for Members who may not have been aware of the process.
23	Further consultation required	There was considerable discussion on the process of appointment to Ward Committees. Members are invited to express any appetite for a fuller review of Ward Committee composition, alongside a review of the composition of the P&R Committee. As there are so many different options for this, in order to be able to propose any clear recommendations, further consultation would be essential and final outcome highly unlikely to be delivered for March 2025.

Vacancies		
25(1)	Clarification of existing practice	See 1(3)(d). Clarifies that the Standing Order applies to both Committees and Sub-Committees (where the latter has spaces specifically reserved for the Court, to be appointed by the Court.)
25(2)	Introducing process	In the event that the Member does not respond to notice issued of the end of their term on a certain committee or sub-committee appointed by the Court, it shall be assumed that they wish to re-stand, unless they are otherwise ineligible to do so.
26 Not used	Formatting	Numbering throughout the document will be addressed once the final content has been approved.
Sub-Committees		
27(1)(NB)	Clarification of existing practice	During consultation, there seemed to be confusion as to why Policy and Resources Committee was responsible for reviewing proposals for the creation of a new Sub-Committee or Working Party. This minor amendment seeks to address the fact that the Committee has the responsibility by virtue of its oversight of governance arrangements (as captured in its Court Order.)

<p>27(2-10)</p>	<p>Change</p>	<p>Proposes that appointing Committees are to determine, by expression of interest and ballot (in the event of a contest), the membership of its sub-committees, including who will act as Chair and Deputy Chair (also to be determined by ballot). The Standing Orders here suggest the procedure of how this will be managed and who will be eligible.</p> <p>These additional Standing Orders also seek to clarify the eligibility of external members and ex-officio members, in standing and voting.</p> <p>Alternative options include the Sub-Committee electing its own Chair and Deputy Chair at its first meeting. However, from discussion at Informal Court, on balance, it seemed that Members would prefer that the appointing Committee retain oversight of who holds this role, to help ensure a clear direction and oversight of the Sub-Committee.</p>
<p>Joint Committees</p>		
<p>28</p>	<p>Clarification of existing practice</p>	<p>See 1(3)(d)</p>
<p>Chairs/Chairmen</p>		
<p>29(1)(e)</p>	<p>Change</p>	<p>In practice, Chairs must liaise with the Town Clerk (TC) and Chief Executive (or their representative) in order to exercise the various powers set out in this Standing Order on the basis that the TC is ultimately responsible for the issuing of Summons (SO34), and associated paperwork.</p> <p>With regard to the addition/rescheduling of meetings, there is an inherent and not inconsiderable additional resource demand required from officers across departments, as a result.</p> <p>Moving meetings can have detrimental effects on project plans and report consultation processes, officer annual leave entitlement (as officers often amend their leave to best fit around their committee obligations), amongst other things. This is</p>

		<p>why, in the event that (in the opinion of the Chair) a special meeting is required, or a meeting should be rescheduled, consultation with the Town Clerk and relevant Chief Officers is proposed. If approved, it will still be very much possible to add/move meetings, but a more rigorous process shall ensure that Members are taking into account the impact on resourcing, workloads and pressures, in line with the Member Officer Charter. It was also flagged that last minute changes prevents wider Membership from attending meetings, hence the proposal to formally consult Members if a change is proposed within three-months of a meeting.</p> <p>A further observation: As part of the Lisvane Governance Review, Members recognised the pressures that additional sub-committees placed on Officers and Members, to the extent that it adopted a formal mechanism to restrict the creation of new sub-committees and working parties (SO27) subject to a full business case and resource plan, to be approved by P&R. More formal meetings were conducted over 2024 (approximately 510) than there were in 2018/19 (pre-Lisvane) (approximately 420). It is, therefore, considered prudent to introduce appropriate mechanisms to manage additional meeting requests, to ensure that attention is not drawn away from core governance activities/expectations (e.g. the expeditious turnaround of minutes).</p> <p>Finally, with regard to meeting location: Some Chairs/Committees/Sub-Committees have requested to host their meetings offsite (i.e not in the Guildhall complex). Whilst this is wholly understandable, particularly where the committee concerned oversees responsibilities outside the Square Mile, we have obligations to ensure we make any reasonable adjustments so that our meetings are accessible to the public, and unfortunately, some venues are not appropriate. Beyond that, alternative venues may not have the necessary Audio-Visual equipment; there can also be additional hire costs associated with using third-party sites, and budgets need to be allocated before any change of venue can be agreed. A Checklist is, therefore, being developed for use in the event that it is considered strategically important/necessary to host a meeting outside the Guildhall Complex, so the Town Clerk can assess whether it is feasible.</p>
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29(2)	No Change	<p>Members sought clarification on the differing term lengths of chairs, as set out in Standing Order 29. Due to any change having implications to specific service areas (which have not been consulted on the matter). No amendment is proposed at this time but if Members wish to review this, it is suggested that background on how the current term limits for Chairs were determined, be circulated to Members. If further action is then considered necessary, Members may commission a further review.</p> <p>All the current committee chair term limits have been considered and approved by the Court of Common Council.</p>
29(3)(a)	Change	<p>As currently drafted, this Standing Order allows a Member to sit as chair of Natural Environment Board (NEB), West Ham Park Committee (WHP) (which share the same memberships) <i>and</i> a further, third Committee. This is incongruous with Standing Order 22(2), concerning Committee limits, whereby NEB and WHP simply count as one. This clarification, if approved, will mean that a Member can sit as both Chair of NEB and WHP, but <u>not</u> a third committee.</p>
29(3)(e)	Introducing process	<p>Codifying current practice of <i>not</i> appointing external Members as Chairs of Committees due to limiting factors such as, not being able to vote on certain matters, and being unable to speak at the Court of Common Council.</p>
29(4)	No change	<p>This SO prescribes a deadline for nominations for those seeking to stand as a Committee Chair. No change is currently proposed although some Members suggested that the current deadline was restrictive. It is for Members to determine if they wish to revise this Standing Order, and remove the deadline.</p>
29(8)	Further consultation required	<p>Full review of the P&R Composition is proposed, including the procedure for the election of Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Vice Chairs.</p>

Deputy Chairs/Chairmen		
30(3)(a)	Clarification of existing practice	Correction required: a Member may still be on the Court of Common Council, but if they have lost their seat on the Committee in question, they would not be eligible to serve as its chair unless they took up an ex-officio post, which is set out in SO 30(4)(b).
30(4)(c)	Clarification of existing practice	Makes explicit the current practice around External Members standing for the role of Deputy Chair, only where the Court Order states it is expressly able to do so.
30(5)	No Change	As with Standing Order 29, This SO prescribes a deadline for nominations for those seeking to stand as a Deputy Chair of a committee. No change is currently proposed although some Members suggested that the current deadline was restrictive. It is for Members to determine if they wish to revise this Standing Order, and remove the deadline.
30(8-9)	Further consultation required	Full review of the P&R Composition is proposed, including the procedure for the election of Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Vice Chairs.
Access to meetings		
32(1)	Introducing process	Proposes a clearer a procedure on how obligatory public access to meetings may be removed for committees and sub-committees overseeing exclusively non-local authority non-police authority functions. This is to ensure a consistency of approach.
Notice of Meetings		
33(2)	Clarification of existing practice	Explicitly teases out that this Standing Order still applies to non-local authority and non-police authority functions, on the basis that it is good practice to allow Members on any committee/sub-committee, to have five clear working days to review the associated meeting paperwork, save in exception circumstances where this is not possible.

Summons		
34(2-3)	Clarification of existing practice	See 1(3)(d)
34(5)	Clarification of existing practice	Clearly sets out the current practice on how Committee questions are to be managed at the discretion of the Chair. This is considered the most pragmatic approach given the variation of business at meetings across the City of London Corporation and that the Chair is ultimately responsible for the efficient conduct of business.
34(6)	Clarification of existing practice	Addresses a historic typographical error.
Attendance		
35(3)	Clarification of existing practice	There is no change proposed to what is currently in practice, but it has been reformatted with the use of a footnote for the purpose of readability. The explicit reference to matters of exceptional commercial sensitivity have also been added for completeness.
Quorum		
36(3)	Change	Following recent experiences where formal meetings have been dissolved due to the lack of quorum, only for a few more Members to arrive shortly thereafter, a revision to the length of time allowed to establish a quorum is considered prudent and remains compliant with necessary legislation.
36(3)	Introducing process	Provides a reasonable expectation that, in the event a quorum is lost during proceedings, that a 15-minute window be permitted to re-establish quorum.

Conduct of Debate		
37(1)	Clarification of existing practice	Confirms current practice in terms of how the conduct of debate is managed through the Chair at Committees and Sub-Committees. This language mirrors that which is used for the Court of Common Council.
37(3-5)	Change	Proposes explicitly how Amendments are to be managed within a Committee and Sub-Committee context. The Standing Orders are currently silent on this, and so the addition has been made for clarity, but is in-keeping with the management of Amendments at Court, to help provide consistency.
Decisions		
38(1)	Clarification of existing practice	See 1(3)(d)
38(2)	Introducing process	Noting that decisions at Committee/Sub-Committee will either be unanimous or carried by simple majority, this new proposed Standing Order explains what the Chair should do in the event that it is unclear as to whether a majority has been established, without requiring for a full recorded division to be conducted, by name.
38(3)	Clarification of existing practice	Subject to the new SO 38(2) being adopted, it was felt clarification would be required for this Standing Order, to make clear that it referred to the process required for a full, recorded division.
38(4)	Clarification of existing practice	This Standing Order reflects current practice, whereby the Chair has a casting vote, as outlined in Standing Order 29(1)(c), and is added here for completeness.
Disorder		
39	Clarification of existing practice	See 1(3)(d)
Access to Documents		
45(4)	Clarification of existing practice	Whilst this Standing Order was not under review, for completeness, reference to Sub-Committees has been added, in-keeping with amendments/clarifications throughout the document.

Budgets		
48(2)(a)	Clarification of existing practice	Efficiency & Performance Sub-Committee is now a Working Party.
48(4)	Clarification of existing practice	It is good practice to articulate acronyms, even if well established, in the first instance of its use.